

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

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R 231145Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5567

INFO USDOC WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMCONSUL KADUNA

USLO PEKING

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 LAGOS 14821

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, NI

SUBJECT: FIRST LAGOS INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR - WRAPUP

REF: LAGOS 14307 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: DESPITE SHORT LEAD TIME AND THE USUAL FORMIDABLE

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LOGISTICAL OBSTACLES, LAGOS TRADE FAIR OF NOV. 26-DEC. 11 WAS
PESODUING SUCCESS FROM POINT OF VIEW OF NIGERIANS AND MOST
PARTICIPANTS. USDOC'S AMERICAN EXHIBITORS REPORTED RECORD-\$

BREAKING DIRECT SALES OF DOLS 41.4 MILLION AND PROJECTED ONE-
YEAR SALES OF DOLS 360.8 MILLION. THIS CABLE IS GENERAL WRAPUP
SUPPLEMENTING USDOC'S END-OF-SHOW REPORT (REFTEL) END SUMMARY.

1. THE FIRST LAGOS INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR WAS HELD NOV. 27-DEC. 11 IN THE MASSIVE, DOLS 175 MILLION TRADE FAIR COMPLEX THIRTEEN MILES WEST OF DOWNTON LAGOS ON BADAGRY HIGHWAY. NO OFFICIAL ATTENDANCE FIGURE IS AVAILABLE BUT WE ESTIMATE IT AT AT LEAST 300,00. THE 850-ACRE FAIRGROUNDS WERE SO SPACIOUS THAT CROWDS NEVER SEEMED OVERWHELMING. ATTENDANCE WAS HELD DOWN BY INADEQUATE TRANSPORTATION TO THE REMOTE LOCATION AND BY AN ATTENDANCE CHARGE OF ABOUT DOLS 1. TRADE FAIR AUTHORITIES SAID 56 NATIONS MOUNTED OFFICIAL EXHIBITS MANNED BY 8,000 PERSONS IN 1,200 STANDS. THEY FURTHER CLAIMED THAT 3,500 COMPANIES TOOK PART, ALTHOUGH FAIR WAS TOO LARGE FOR EMBOFFS TO IMPACT IN DETAIL, ALL INTERIOR EXHIBITION SPACE (64,000 SQUARE METERS) WAS UTILIZED. ENORMOUS OUTDOOR DISPLAY SPACE SURROUNDING THE FOUR EXHIBITION HALLS APPEARED TO BE ONLY 30 PERCENT OCCUPIED EXCEPT FOR THAT AROUND THE NIGERIAN COMMERCIAL HALL, WHICH WAS CROWDED WITH HEAVY EQUIPMENT AND ANIMATED DISPLAYS. GREAT BRITAIN, BRAZIL, ITALY AND A FEW OTHER COUNTRIES AND LARGE NIGERIAN FIRMS CONSTRUCTED OWN PAVILIONS IN OUTDOOR AREA BUT MOST PREFERRED INTERIOR SPACE.

2. THIRTY-FOUR AMERICAN FIRMS PARTICIPATED IN THE OFFICIAL USDOC EXHIBIT, WHICH OCCUPIED ABOUT 2,000 SQUARE METERS INTERIOR SPACE AND 1,500 SQUARE METERS OUTDOORS. GENERAL MOTORS TOOK ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF INTERIOR AND NEARLY ALL OUTDOOR SPACE IN MAJOR EFFORT TO OVERCOME LATE ENTRY TO NIGERIAN UNCLASSIFIED

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MARKET ON MAJOR SCLAE. OTHER USDOC EXHIBITORS RANGED FROM BLUE-CHIP MULTINATIONALS TO SMALL, LESS KNOWN NEW-TO-MARKET FIRMS. SOME ADDITIONAL FIFTEEN AMERICAN FIRMS EXHIBITED INDEPENDENTLY OF USDOC, EITHER ON OWN OR, LIKE CATERPILLAR, JOHMQPUNMANVILLE, JOHN DEERE AND INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER THROUGH NIGERIAN REPRESENTATIVES. REGISTERED ATTENDANCE AT THE OFFICIAL USDOC EXHIBIT WAS ABOUT 3,000 BUT MAJORITY OF VISITORS WALKED THROUGH WITHOUT REGISTERING.

3. USIA STAGED AN OFFICIAL EXHIBIT WITH A SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY THEME IN A LARGE GEODESIC DOME ERECTED OUTSIDE THE HALL HOUSING OUR COMMERCIAL EXHIBIT. USIS EMBOFFS HELPED COMPLETED ERECTION OF THE DOME DAY BEFORE FAIR OPENED. AT LEAST 150,000 VISITORS WERE CLOCKED THROUGH THE DOME. TELEVISION COVERAGE FIVE DAYS AFTER THE FAIR OPENING GREATLY SPURRED ATTENDANCE.

4. IN FIRST FOUR DAYS OF FAIR, EXHIBITORS EXPERIENCED MODERATE BUSINESS AND SOME FEARED BEING BURDENED WITH UNSOLD EQUIPMENT TO BE RE-EXPORTED. BY END OF FIRST WEEK, HOWEVER, IT WAS CLEAR THAT MANY EXHIBITORS WERE DOING RECORD BUSINESS. AT THIS WRITING ONLY FIVE COUNTRIES HAVE REPORTED DIRECT SALES FIGURES FOR THE FAIR: UK (66 OF 112 COMPANIES) DOLS 129 MILLION; US DOLS

41,432,000: AUSTRIA DOLS 3 MILLION:
HUNGARY DOLS 2.33 MILLION: CANADA DOLS 1.55 MILLION. THE WEST
GERMAN EMBASSY HAS NO SALES FIGURE BUT REPORTS OVERWHELMING
BUSINESS. ONLY USDOC PROJECTED ANTICIPATED SALES, A WHOPPING
DOLS 360,781,000. THE USDOC FIGURES COME FROM WRITTEN REPORTS
SUBMITTED BY THE 34 EXHIBITORS WHO WERE ENCOURAGED TO BE
REALISTIC: THE READER MAY OR MAY NOT TAKE THEIR ESTIMATES
LITERALLY. WE UNDERSTAND THE HIGHERST PREVIOUS DIRECT SALES
FIGURE FOR A USDOC TRADE FAIR WAS ABOUT DOLS 10 MILLION FOR AN
AVIATION EVENT. LAGOS CLEARLY SET A NEW RECORD. PARTICIPANTS
WERE ALSO EXTREMELY PLEASED OVER CONTACTS WITH POTENTIAL
DISTRIBUTORS AND AGENTS.

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 EA-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00

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R 231145Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5568

INFO USDOC WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

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5. OTHER NOTWORTHY ASPECTS OF THE FAIR WERE THE NON-PARTICIPATION

ON AN OFFICIAL BASIS OF THE USSR, POLAND AND AUSTRALIA, CON-
SPICUOUS ABSENCES IN THE LIGHT OF OFFICIAL PARTICIPATION BY
VIRTUALLY NCISIGNIFICANT TRADING NATIONS OF WEST AND EAST.
EXPORTERS FROM THESE COUNTRIES PARTICIPATED ONLY THROUGH NIGERIAN
DISTRIBUTORS. BRITAIN'S BRIGHTLY-COLORED TRIPLE-CANOPIED
PAVILION STRATEGICALLY LOCATED NEXT TO THE MAIN ENTRANCE WAS
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THE LARGEST, MOST STRIKING AND PROBABLY MOST EXPENSIVE (AND
MOST UNCOMFORTABLY WARM) OUTDOOR DISPLAY. JAPAN'S PARTICIPATION
WAS CURIOUSLY LOW-KEY: A SMALL INFORMATION BOOTH AND A LAST-
MINUTE RECEPTION IN THE CLOSING HOURS OF THE FAIR ATTENDED MAINLY
BY JAPANESE AND AMERICANS. CHINA HAD AN ATTRACTIVE EXHIBIT
ABOUT HALF THE SIZE OF OURS IN THE SAME HALL PLUS AN OUTSIDE
RETAIL BOOTH WHICH SOLD OUT FIVE DAYS BEFORE THE FAIR ENDED:
ITS INTERIOR DISPLAY WAS A PLEASING MIXTURE OF ART, DEVELOPMENT
ACHIEVEMENTS, SIMPLE MACHINERY AND CONSUMER GOODS BUT SEEMED TO
BE A STANDARD DISPLAY SHOWN AT ALL INTERNATIONAL FAIRS.
IRONICALLY, THE SEVERAL BLACK AFRICAN COUNTRIES EXHIBITING IN
THE ECOWAS BUILDING SUFFERED FROM THE FACT THAT THEIR PRINCIPAL
EXPORT ITEMS (DRINK, VEGETABLES, FURNITURE AND TEXTILES) WERE
PROHIBITED FROM SALES BECAUSE OF NIGERIAN TRADE RESTRICTIONS.

6. MAJOR PROBLEMS OF THE FAIR WERE THE ADVANCE NOTICE OF LESS
THAN ONE YEAR: SHIPPING COMPLICATIONS WHICH CAUSED A FEW
SMALL NATIONAL PAVILIONS TO CLOSE FOR LACK OF EXHIBIT MATERIAL:
CUSTOMS' BELATED DECISION TO TREAT FAIR SHIPMENTS AS ORDINARY
IMPORTS, DELAYING MANY SHIPMENTS ON THE DOCKS: THE USUAL
FIERCE STRUGGLE FOR ADEQUATE HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS AND IN-
ADEQUATE UTILITY, PUBLICITY, TRAFFIC CONTROL AND CATERING
ARRANGEMENTS. ONE AMERICAN SALESMAN REPORTEDLY SUFFERED
DEHYDRATION AFTER DECLINING TO DRINK THE LOCAL WATER OR EVEN
BOTTLED DRINKS DESPITE HIGH HUMIDITY AND TEMPERATURE.

7. NO OBSTACLES PROVED INSURMOUNTABLE. FROM THE NIGERIAN
AND AMERICAN VIEWPOINTS AT LEAST, THE FAIR WAS
AN OUTSTANDING COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL SUCCESS ALTHOUGH MANY
NIGERIANS WONDER IF IT WAS WORTH THE COST OF THE VAST AND
NOW EMPTY PERMANENT FAIRGROUNDS. NO SPECIFIC EVENTS HAVE
BEEN ANNOUNCED FOR THE FAIR COMPLEX IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND
THE NIGERIANS HAVE YET TO DECIDE WHEN THEY WILL STAGE THE
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SECOND LAGOS INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR.
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Message Attributes

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